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English at East High School

The thirteen teachers in the East High School English Department work toward the same goal, but each teacher has the freedom to teach the pupils in a manner which she feels is most effective. Individual members of the department are constantly trying various techniques and devices which are shared with the other members. Many times it is found that one teacher is successful in using a certain technique but another teacher is not. As long as the general aim is kept in mind, the teacher is free to exercise her ingenuity to meet the individual differences of the pupils she is teaching.

At present the following are the department aims of improving communication skills of writng, speaking, reading, and listening:

1. To develop the power to communicate ideas freely, adequately, and effectively
2. To foster clear thought when listening to the ideas of others
3. To stimulate an interest in and to develop the habit of abundant, diversified, and thought-provoking reading
4. To develop a discriminating use of mass communications

There are fifty-four classes of English including speech and journalism. The tenth and eleventh grade courses consist primarily of American literature with oral and written composition. In the eleventh grade journalism may be chosen. This course is usually recommended to the pupil who has above average grades and is interested in newspaper work. The twelfth grade courses are elective. English literature with oral and written composition is recommended to the pupils who plan to go to college. A semester of contemporary literature and a semester of world literature with oral and written composition may be elected by any twelfth grade pupil. Speech and dramatics are elective courses which may be taken any semester the student can find time in his schedule.

All the articles in this issue were written by members of the English Department of East Senior High School in Rockford, Illinois.

The various units in the past have been organized around literature types as essays, short stories, novels, biographies, and lyric and narrative poetry. Because the members of the department felt that they could teach with more freedom with the limited available material, several of the teachers in a two-week workshop organized the tenth grade course based on a central theme of human relationships. The year's course consists of the following seven units: social adjustment and orientation, adventure in everyday life, thinking and emotions, struggle for freedom and individual rights, civic heritage and responsibilities, family relationships and social problems, and art of living. In each unit there are suggested reading materials and language activities as well as basic grammar requirements.

Although individual teachers have experimented with various units of the seven mentioned, no one teacher has taught all the units. This is the first year the teachers are carrying out the proposed course. There are the usual difficulties, but generally the teachers are enthusiastic about a course which they feel is more functional in meeting the needs of the East High sophomores.

Other schools which are planning similar changes in their curriculum may be interested in knowing more about one of the above mentioned units. No doubt other English teachers have wondered how they could help the new pupils in high school feel more at ease, or how they could avoid the plight of the pupils completing high school without having partaken of the advantages which the school has offered.

The social adjustment and orientation unit planned by the department aims to help solve the above mentioned difficulties. The goal of the unit is stated as follows: to help the student become better acquainted with the traditions, organization, and plan of East High School, to help him to recognize his responsibilities and privileges as a citizen of his school, and to help him establish effective study habits. The work is planned so that the aims may be realized through the language activities suggested in the outline. Assignments for the first eight days are suggested as follows:

First Day:

1. Complete enrollment blanks.
2. Check out textbooks; sign book cards.
3. Explain any rules for classroom procedure, *i.e.,* requirements for written work, make-up work, tests, outside assignments, conduct, etc.

4. Assignment: An oral presentation emphasizing the kind of person the student is, so that the class will know him better.
 Suggested topics—
 I Can't Resist New Shoes
 My Greatest Mistake
 I Never Could Get Away with Anything
 Why I Want to Be a_____

Second Day:

1. Finish checking out books.
2. Presentation of oral introductions.
3. Assignment: Locate and copy all mottoes over school doors.
 Suggested activities:
 Paragraph interpreting mottoes from the standpoint of their significance, suitability, inspiration, applicability to present life and life outside school, and as a standard of behavior. (Note: these paragraphs may be written in duplicate so that the student may read one to the class while the teacher makes written comments on the other.)
 (Grammar technique: avoid "and-a" and gross usage errors.)

Third Day:

Complete oral introductions.

Fourth Day:

1. Recitation on motto assignment.
2. Assignment:
 a. Give students sample copies of each type of "admit."
 b. Paste in notebook.
 c. Fill in all blanks.
 d. Completely identify each "admit," explaining its purpose and how it is procured.

Fifth Day:

1. Check "admit" assignment while students write a "practice theme." (Spelling, neatness, and general good form should be stressed.)
 a. What I Expect to Gain from My Education at East High
 b. What I Expect to Give to East High

c. If You Want to Be My Friend, You Should Know That_____

d. _____ Is Kingpin at Our House

e. Breakfast at Our House

2. Assignment: Students should make a list of people in the school that they feel they should know.

Sixth Day:

1. Interview assignment:

 a. Some students will be chosen from each English I class each period to interview selected staff members. These students will report the results of the interviews to all English I classes meeting in their respective periods. Thus not more than seven students will interview any one selected.

 b. Only students who can give time before and after school should be selected. This project will demand full co-operation from each member of the department.

2. Special reports: those students who are not assigned to the above project may do any of the following reports.

 a. Special buses—Someone who must or can ride the various special city buses to report to the class the route, the time, the cost, etc. (One person to report on each special bus.)

 b. General information about East High—one person for each subject.

 (1) How to treat chaperons
 (2) How to act in classrooms
 (3) How to act at games
 (4) How to act in study hall
 (5) How to act at after-game parties
 (6) How to act in the cafeteria
 (7) Use of the locker
 (8) Use of the office telephone
 (9) The Memorial Garden
 (10) The E-Rab (who, what, where, when, why?)
 (11) How to behave on school bus—interview driver.
 (12) How to behave on city special bus—interview driver.
 (13) Location and numbering plan of rooms.

c. Class or group discussion—what things employers and/or colleges ask about high school graduates. Follow this up with report on office permanent record card which shows what is actually asked for.

Seventh Day:

1. Oral direction assignment: Each student gives oral directions (one-minute talk) to class.

 Suggested directions:

 a. How to get from English classroom to swimming pool, bookroom, woodshop, electric shop, machine shop, zoology laboratory, art room, gym offices, Little Theater and auditorium, nurse's office, library, fire drill station, and cafeteria.

 b. How to get from English room to home, hospitals, Beyer Stadium, Illinois Central station, bus station, Alpine Park, Levings Park, Sinnissippi Park, and Beatty Park.

 c. How to get from the Faust Hotel to police station, city hall, nearest hospital, West High School, East High School pool and gym, and home.
 (In these, try to avoid the following: "jist," "go up (or down) the street," "pick up this street," "and everything," "then you hit this street," and "there is many signs.")

2. Suggested testing method: After directions have been given, select certain ones to be repeated on paper.

Eighth Day:

Reports on interviews and special projects.

The above assignments will help to acquaint the student with practically every feature of the school. The unit continues with very definite instructions on how to study, including efficiency in reading, note taking, theme writing, studying for examinations, and a suitable way of taking the various types of examinations. Rules for manuscript form and getting acquainted with the library are also included.

The articles which follow this general outline relate some of the classroom procedures which various teachers have found successful.

VIRGINIA WILDI
Head of the English Department

Book Reports Come Alive

Three little girls in our neighborhood busily "played house" last summer, one taking the role of father, one the mother, and the third one the child. Sometimes the cast was increased to include a baby-sitter. One day in answer to my casual query, "Playing house?" I received the reply, "No, playing fairies." Another day it was the coronation of Queen Elizabeth; sometimes it was a wedding, but usually it was simply "house."

This situation is typical of all neighborhoods because children universally like to act. When do they lose this desire? Never, in my opinion. As they become older the expression of that desire is often inhibited; therefore, it is well to foster this natural inclination which results in so much fun and which gives them entrance into the world of another person, increasing their sympathy and understanding of others.

Book reports often bog down into dull affairs, and in an effort to pep them up I have used the device of dramatization. To be specific I shall tell you what I sometimes do with reports on plays.

In making the assignment I ask that each student choose a character from one of the plays he has read and be ready to impersonate that character in a conversation with a character from another play. The characters will meet accidentally, it is supposed, at a certain spot, let us say a park bench, and the conversation is not to be memorized lines from the play but lines improvised by the students largely on the spur of the moment—lines which they think the characters might use at such a meeting. Each student is to make an effort to act and talk as his character would act and talk, revealing such traits as kindliness, snobbishness, carelessness, thoughtfulness, heroism, and self-sacrifice. The name, author, and setting of each play should be made known, and the chief topic of conversation should be the problem of each play. I ask them also to make an effort to respond to each other during the dialog, asking questions and making remarks which will enable each to tell his story in an interesting manner.

However, explanations do not seem to suffice, and so I demonstrate:

"Here is a park bench. Seated on it is an old man. Up to him comes the Earl of Essex—I'm the Earl. Because he is a courtier he'll have a grand manner and grace of movement. So I make a sweeping bow as an earl would make, and say,

" 'Pardon me. May I share this bench with you?'

"The old man will respond genially—he's a good-natured sort—and because he's old his voice will be high pitched and somewhat cracked. Also his movements will be somewhat stiff and jerky.

" 'Glad to have ya. Mighty glad to have ya. Was just a-lookin' for a companion. Sit down.'

" 'Thank you. I am the Earl of Essex in Maxwell Anderson's play, *Elizabeth the Queen,* sixteenth century England.'

" 'Glad to know ya. Earl, eh? Isn't that something! I'm Old Man Minick in Edna Ferber's play, shortly after World War I. Nice morning, ain't it?'

" 'Yes, 'tis. Do you come here often?'

" 'Real often. I live just over the hill at the Old Folks Home. Nice walk over here. Some of my buddies from the Home are usually here, too.'

" 'I suppose you are alone in the world and therefore have found it necessary to live at an institution.'

" 'No, oh no. I lived for quite a spell with my son and daughter-in-law. Real good they were to me, but they treated me like a baby. "You mustn't do this and you must do that," and then there was the matter of the pillow.'

" 'Pillow?'

" 'Ya see, my wife had always given me two pillows to sleep on every night, but my daughter-in-law said I needed only one because when she gave me two, she'd always find one of them on the floor in the morning. But I just couldn't sleep on only one pillow even if one did fall on the floor. Can you understand that?'

" 'Hardly. You see I've been beheaded.' "

That is about as far as the demonstration need go, but to make clear what happens or may happen in a report of this kind I shall complete the dialog between Essex and Minick.

Minick speaks, "Beheaded? You don't say! Why?"

"I was beheaded by the woman I loved, Elizabeth the Queen."

"Well, now, that was an awful way to treat ya. What did she do that for?"

"She was afraid that I would take her throne."

"How'd she ever get such a foolish notion? My wife never worried about me taking anything of hers, and if she had of, I sure woulda talked her out of it. Couldn't you convince Elizabeth that you didn't want her throne?"

"Oh, but I did want it. If we had lived some other time, we might have been happy, but there was an empire between us. And had she spared my life, I would not have been content so long as she was queen and I merely the queen's husband."

"Ya, well, it's no fun being the underdog, I can understand that, and that's what I was at my son's home. They'd run off to their doings and tell me I had to stay home, be comfortable, take care of myself. And when my daughter-in-law would have her club meeting at the house, I tried to help out in their discussions. But, no sir, they wouldn't listen to me. So one day I just ran away. They had their life to live and I had mine. Came up here to the Home. I knew some of the men here because I had met them in this park, and we always had fine discussions. Right over there are four or five of them right now. So I'll have to leave you. You see, we're discussing the national budget. Pretty big after the war. We've got to do something about it. If you'll excuse me, I'll say good-bye to you. Sure was good to talk to you. Come again when you feel better after being beheaded."

"Thank you. Farewell, my friend. It has been good to hear of problems other than my own."

If the Earl of Essex were talking to Mio in *Winterset* (Maxwell Anderson), part of the conversation might go like this:

Mio is speaking: "There was no empire between Miriamne and me. We, too, were lovers, but we wanted to live."

"You died then. How?"

"Killed by gangsters."

"Gangsters? ? ? Oh, yes, you lived in America in the 20th century, shortly after the First World War. How did it happen?"

"When I was a child my father had been executed for a murder he didn't commit. When I grew up, I swore that some day I would bring the true killer to justice. But before I found him I had fallen in love. Then I found that the girl's brother was tied up with the same gang that the murderer was in. Getting the murderer would involve the brother, too."

"And so you let him go for that reason."

"Yes, it was the brother's life or mine. I knew that if I went on living, Miriamne and I would be cut apart by the grave of that brother. My mission was over, and Miriamne's love had taught me to forget to hate. I lost my taste for revenge when I found that it would fall on her."

"Noble, noble lad. What happened to her?"

"She ran out to me in the street where I lay after the gang had shot me and shrieked to all who could hear the name of the murderer. Then the machine guns let loose on her."

"I don't think I would care to have lived in those gangster days."

"Not so bad as the days a queen would behead her lover."

"To shoot people down in cold blood on the streets? Worse, much worse, but I am glad to have had this talk with you."

"I have enjoyed the chat. Good-bye, my lord."

"Farewell, my boy. May better days come."

Suppose we listen in on a conversation which takes place between two women—Lady Mary in Barrie's *Admirable Crichton* and romantic Melisande in Milne's *Romantic Age*. Lady Mary is heard saying,

"I'm very unhappy."

"But why, on a beautiful, wonderful, magical morning like this?"

"I have found there is something wrong with England."

"What could possibly be wrong with England?"

"I have found that the best man among us is a butler."

"That sounds ridiculous! Aren't you letting your imagination run away with you? That's what I did before I realized that reality is much more romantic than my dreams were."

"No, it seems to me that my eyes have just been opened."

"Tell me your story."

"My father's family with a few friends and two servants were shipwrecked while on a yachting cruise. We spent two years on a remote island before we had an opportunity to return to England."

"Thrilling! What happened on the island?"

"If it had not been for the butler we all would have starved. It was he who knew how to cook and what to cook. He supervised the building of a house of logs, showed us how to hunt, skin the animals, and make clothes of the hides, food of the meat. He even installed a dynamo so that we could light our house by electricity. He proved to be a man of leadership, intelligence, and charm. He was the ruler in our little group because he was the best man among us, but now that we are back in England he must again be a butler."

"That doesn't seem quite right, does it? But why should it make you so unhappy?"

"I was about to marry him when we were rescued. Now he is a butler and I am thrown back to my previous betrothed, Lord Brocklehurst, a miserable substitute."

"If you lived in America you could marry the butler, couldn't you? And he wouldn't be a butler long, but maybe a scientist of some sort and make a lot of money. Yes, perhaps there *is* some-

thing wrong with England, but I don't feel so this morning. You see, I got engaged last night."

"To a fine young man?"

"Oh, yes. We're middle class, you know, and in our class there really are some very fine young men. I didn't used to think so—thought they were all too ordinary, wore the same kind of stupid clothes, played the same games, talked about the same things—"

"And what did you want?"

"Someone truly romantic. Like Sir Lancelot—

'All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick jeweled shone the saddle leather—' "

"You didn't want the jeweled leather, too?"

"Well, I'm afraid I did, or something like that. In fact, when I first met my fiancé, he was all dressed up like a fairy tale prince. It was early one morning when I was taking a walk in the woods near our home. He said he was the second son of the second son of a woodcutter, ha, ha, but of course, he was fooling me then. I fell in love with him because he was so different, I thought, and when I found he was just an ordinary man dressed for a costume ball whose car had broken down, forcing him to spend the night in the woods, I was pretty sick about it. However, I got over it. My whole point of view has changed. I used to hate to prepare ordinary food, particularly bread sauce, which my father likes very much. I didn't even like to talk about it; it seemed so commonplace and unromantic. But now I know that making bread sauce for the man I love will be very romantic indeed, and I'm studying recipes."

"I wish you every happiness."

"Thank you. I hope you, too, will find happiness. Perhaps your Lord Brocklehurst—but no, not after you have known the butler. But perhaps some day you'll find someone in the upper class as good as the butler."

"Thank you for your good wishes."

Sometimes two students will work together who have chosen characters who seem utterly incongruous. Let us see how such a pair works out, for instance a little colored angel from *Green Pastures* (Marc Connelly) and Teddy Brewster in *Arsenic and Old Lace* (Kesselring). Teddy Brewster comes dashing in shouting:

"Charge!"

"Who're yo'all, and what're yo' chahgin'?"

"I'm Teddy Roosevelt and I'm digging the Panama Canal. Another lock is needed by nightfall."

"Whyfor yo' needs another lock by nightfall?"

"My sisters said so. They have another man to put in it."

"What yo'all talkin' about? Another man to put in the lock? Where'd you git him and whyfor they wanna put 'im in the lock?"

"You see, he's dead."

"Dead? Oh, my!"

"He was an old man with no friends, no family, no place to go. So my sisters gave him a little elderberry wine and after a while his troubles were all over."

"Yo' mean they kilt him?"

"I suppose you could call it that. They put him out of his misery."

"Oooh, I don't think de Lawd would like that."

"Well, now, who are you and how do you know so much about what the Lord would like or wouldn't like?"

"I'se a cherub from Heaben."

"From Heaven! Say, what's it like up there?"

"Oh, nice, awfully nice. We has the nicest fish fries you evah heahd tell of. And de Lawd is so good and kind. He suffers when man is wicked. My, how He suffered when they crucified Christ. And maybe He's sufferin' right now cuz your sisters kilt a man."

The students do some interesting things with this assignment. I am pleased when the mother in *Sun Up* uses a corn-cob pipe, little Jan in *The Piper* (Peabody) has his crutch, Valentine Brown in *Quality Street* (Barrie) carries an empty coat sleeve. If Old Man Minick is talking to Dulcy (Kaufman and Connelly), he might give some advice about the treatment of old people, or if to Grandpa in *You Can't Take It With You* (Kaufman and Hart), the two might compare notes about living one's own life. The hero of *Berkeley Square* (Balderston) who says, "Not in your time, nor in mine,—but in God's," is likely to discuss time and space with Death in *Death Takes a Holiday* (Casella), who says, "Those who know me best have found that there is nothing to fear."

These conversations often go off on such tangents, and that is one of the advantages of not having them carefully planned and memorized. Of course, sometimes the student will want to do some sort of planning, such as choosing the person with whom he is to work in order to be somewhat familiar with the play his partner has selected.

I do not expect sparkling dialog and vivid imagination from every pair. Sometimes one of the pair or both of them will not be disposed to lead the other on with questions, and the conversation becomes a one-sided affair, first one person and then the other stating his problem, which perhaps has been painfully memorized. But

the more of this kind of thing that is done, the more at ease will the timid feel and the more inspired will the dull ones become.

I have used this idea also in reports on biographies. The class is divided into groups of five or six, and each student impersonates the character about whom the biography was written. One class period is needed in which the groups plan their conversations and agree upon the places where they will take place. J. P. Morgan's private yacht was the setting for one group in the writer's experience. Another group, greatly puzzled over what their meeting place could be since they were all dead, eventually evolved the idea of meeting at the gates of St. Peter, who questioned each as to what he had done for America or the world. However, whether the characters are living or dead does not pose a problem. A typical group might be: Edna Ferber, Thomas Edison, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Katherine Cornell, and Marian Anderson. Those who are living speak freely with those who have died, the dead ones even telling sometimes the manner in which they have died.

Acting the part of another person makes demands upon the imagination and brings about growth. John Erskine has said, "We have not really budged a step until we take up residence in someone else's point of view." Moreover, although some of the students may have to be coaxed and encouraged a bit, they like it and ask for further opportunities to dramatize.

Edna Youngquist

Words Are Important

Since I believe the knowledge of words, with their synonyms, antonyms and connotations, as well as the spelling of these words, is extremely important in developing more accurate expressions of ideas, I place a great deal of stress upon this in my teaching. Because I feel that this must be done in a definite and exacting way, I employ the discipline of an old-fashioned martinet.

All my students know from the very first day that on Friday of each week during the semester they will have a definite test on all the vocabulary and spelling that has been required of them during the previous weeks. At first, this seems to the students too demanding, but they gradually look forward to something definite to master. It is a theory of mine that young people innately desire some mental discipline, and this can be achieved, in one way, through a regular emphasis on mastery of words and their spelling. I believe it is a necessity for any future business, social, or academic expression of their thoughts.

I employ a variety of vocabulary lists to try to achieve this goal; one of these lists consists of 189 words with five suggested words from which the student must choose the best of the group. To make the choice, he must know all the ramifications of the original word, since the word to be chosen is often quite remote in its similarity to the original. This is a good exercise in selective thinking. Added to this list of 189 words are other lists of words and their closest synonyms, as well as direct antonyms. Supplementing these lists are key words chosen from all types of reading that will be done during the semester; *i.e.,* newspapers, novels, poems, magazine articles, and plays. On the Friday tests the pupils are required to know the spelling of these key words.

I sometimes give these words in oral tests on Friday; in these tests the student is required to spell the word I dictate, define it exactly, and use it in a compound sentence of parallel thoughts, or in a sentence requiring subordination. This device demands a thorough knowledge of the word, as well as a knowledge of the importance of ideas, since one cannot correctly subordinate an idea unless he knows the primary thought to be expressed.

As a result of this emphasis on spelling and vocabulary in a very regular manner, students necessarily become more word conscious.

Elizabeth McGuire

The State of Massachusetts versus Clifford Pyncheon

"But why should anyone want to prove that Clifford killed the Judge? He didn't! Surely you realize that the judge died of apoplexy?"

If that is your reaction to one of my favorite teaching units, I'll not be surprised. I have learned to expect the implications (a) that I don't know how to read, (b) that I was born short in common sense, and (c) that my sense of moral values needs investigation. I hope this paper will dispel your doubts—one way or the other.

How should one present a classic like *The House of the Seven Gables* to modern teen-agers? I used to aim at recognizing Hawthorne's genius. It worked—once. After studying the qualities present in all art (unity, emphasis, "color," rhythm, mood, theme, harmony), each student interpreted *The House* in terms of another art. Impressed by the creative imagination of their papers, I tried the same assignment again—and failed. After several failures I realized that such an approach is for an exceptional student or an exceptional class. Only once had my class been composed of art-loving students who could translate a book's theme into a picture, symphony, garden, dance, or song.

Having abandoned the effort to teach Hawthorne as an artist, I discovered that many exceptional students show an appreciation of his artistry in spite of me. This, however, is just a by-product of the values for which I now aim:

1. the fun of planning and participating in a skit
2. practice in the creative art needed to organize and present a case for trial
3. careful study of characters so that each will be accurately portrayed at the trial
4. such careful reading that no one will be guilty of perjury—making a statement that can be proved false by the book
5. respect for the difference between real and circumstantial evidence.

Even before the first reading assignment, we start planning the trial. I tell the students that the main character has just been pardoned after serving thirty years of a life sentence for murder. Though I explain that he had been the victim of a "frame," I do not spoil the story by telling how or why. However, I do expose one more fact: that later another man dies under circumstances that

could point to murder, with Clifford as the only suspect. Fortunately there is no real evidence of foul play, and the authorities correctly deduce that the man died from natural causes.

But—! If Clifford was successfully framed once, wouldn't it be fun to try it again? The book provides a remarkable smoke screen of circumstantial evidence: motive, opportunity, adequate strength under stress, actions and remarks that suggest guilt. Is the class clever enough to build them up until they hide the main point: that no murder can be established? To test our skill, we shall call three sophomores as jurors, their only qualification being that they know nothing about the book.

Classes tear into the project with enthusiasm. Some do very well; most do fairly well; some, of course, are very bad. Strangely enough, though, even when I consider the performance a complete dud, the students seem proud of it.

The procedure itself offers few problems. I have streamlined it into a script that covers such formalities as calling the court to order, "swearing-in" the witnesses (right hand on the novel and an oath that does *not* agree to tell the *whole* truth), the order and suggested length of attorneys' speeches to the jury, and the judge's final instructions. The rest is left to the ingenuity of the prosecuting attorney and the class.

No two trials are alike. Since success depends largely upon having an able prosecutor, we cast that role first and make him general chairman for the project. Any students who care to do so may join him in reading the book rapidly. Usually it takes less than a week to form a steering committee of several who have finished. Immediately they start to compile these data:

1. a cast consisting of judge, bailiff, defense attorney, doctor or coroner, sheriff, defendant, and witnesses
2. a diagram of the house
3. an itinerary for the flight of Clifford and Hepzibah
4. a similar program for all witnesses, activities to be in keeping with the known character of each
5. a calendar for all key incidents in the book.

The committee needs a little help in selecting a reasonable year for the setting: they know the publication date and laugh if a student suggests a later one; they see the significance of references to photography, the railroad, and the telegraph as new inventions. They settle on specific dates for such events as Phoebe's arrival and Clifford's "insane" conduct before witnesses (blowing soap bubbles, strange reaction to the organ grinder's music, wild re-

marks on the train). They even assign a specific hour and minute for many actions, especially on the day of the "murder." This proves useful, though only part of the data will be used. The faster this material can be compiled, the better, for it gives those who are still reading the book more time to look for discrepancies and correct them in class discussion.

Together the prosecutor and defense attorney plan a defense that will seem sincere but still do more harm than no defense at all. They carefully coach each witness on what truths he must omit and what facts he can safely point out. The doctor, for example, must *not* diagnose the cause of death correctly as a stroke of apoplexy, but he must avoid any untrue statements. I recall a delighful bit of double-talk one physician-father produced for his son. Though technical terms suggested something horrible, it was just a true picture of a throat in a normal state of rigor mortis after a hemorrhage. The doctor blandly stated that the man had probably met his death by strangulation.

Class discussion centers about two subjects: character portrayal and factual data. What sort of person is Hepzibah? How can her fumbling efforts to help Clifford be used to prejudice the jury against him? How can the prosecutor force Holgrave and Phoebe to make admissions of facts that will hurt their friend? Should the conductor and passengers show a vindictive attitude toward him? Should the judge let one of the townspeople refer to Clifford's prison record? Even though the judge immediately and angrily orders it stricken from the record, he can't strike it from the jurors' minds.

There is a short—or maybe long—period while the bailiff escorts the jury to the hall. During that time the class points out any examples of perjury they noticed. I am happy to say that the verdict is always "Not guilty." (I do not count the two "guilty" ones because those classes cheated by misrepresenting known facts.) When the crestfallen class asks wherein they failed, the jury sometimes admits that two were for conviction until the third made them see their error. As one boy said, "If the guy was murdered, Clifford done it. But they shoulda showed more proof than that he was bleedin' at the mouth. They didn't show what made him bleed."

Mary R. Hills

They Wanted More

"Do we hafta have that psychology stuff like my brother's class has?" Bob interrupted the discussion about *The Story of My Life.*

"I'll tell you about our next unit next week, Bob," I hedged, and, fortunately, the discussion went along again.

Bob's offhand remark disturbed me. It was my first year in the system, and I had decided this "psychology stuff" would be one of the highlights of the first semester. I spent the next several preparation periods thumbing through English publications for ideas to make the work more palatable.

Pupil-teacher planning appealed to me, and as I looked over the chapters in the text we would use, I decided that the work dealing with the individual and his adjustment to others could be adapted to a cooperative class project, using small discussion groups part of the time, and bringing the whole class into the discussion toward the close of the unit.

Accordingly, several class periods before I wanted to begin the work, I passed out slips of paper on which I asked the pupils to write three questions about personal problems which they had never had answered. "No names, please," I added, as I noticed some of the timid people looking worried.

"Who's going to answer them?" Of course, it was Bob who wanted to know this.

"You'll know in a few days," I promised.

The risk was that the questions might have been completely useless for the unit. However, I had reckoned rightly on tenth graders. The questions dealt with exactly the kinds of problems our unit was supposed to answer. "How can I meet a boy in one of my classes?" "What can I do not to look so tall and clumsy?" "What makes me giggle so when nothing's funny?" "How can I get my parents to go to church?" "How can I convince my parents I'm old enough to go out with a boy?"

I had already divided the appropriate chapters in the text for five groups: individual differences, drives in human behavior, and reaction to conflict; emotional control; growing up; boy-girl relationships; and getting along with other people. The pupils' questions fell with surprising ease into the five classifications, and after I had sorted them, I made hectograph copies of the questions to distribute to the various groups the day we began the unit. To insure each student's getting into the group he desired, I had each one list first, second, and third choices, and, fortunately, there were only two instances where some reshuffling had to be done. I always find

I can count on there being some extremely cooperative class member to volunteer to change in such a case.

The groups were given two to three class periods to discuss the text material assigned to them and to attempt to arrive at answers or suggested solutions for the questions. The secretary of the group was to keep a "Participation Chart," on which she recorded contributions to the discussion by group members. The chairman would prepare a report to the class on the salient facts in the text material. The chairman assigned other group members to work out several of the proposed activities and report those conclusions to the class. These activities were similar to the following: (1) listing the several higher drives affecting human behavior and citing situations within the students' experiences in which these drives were shown by various persons. As an example, the drive to imitate someone the pupil respected might be revealed by Betty Owen's combing her hair like her math teacher; (2) collecting pictures of faces revealing various emotional responses—fear, anger, love, discouragement, surprise, scorn, etc.; (3) making a survey of respective ages, heights, and weights for sophomore boys and girls to show the wide variation existing; (4) listing characteristics and traits which contribute to happiness or failure in marriage; (5) evaluating a number of tenth graders in regard to their ease in the presence of the opposite sex.

On the general discussion day, we sat around the room, group by group, and began the reports. Some groups presented theirs as radio round tables, others as "learned" counselors, and still others as panels of experts or formal reports. Following the reports on the text material, the group members "answered" the questions. While some of the answers might not please a psychiatrist, most of them were practical and helpful to a remarkable degree. In cases where the groups could not answer the questions, the entire class took a hand, and by actual count in the three classes so engaged, only two questions went completely unanswered by the students. Some of the questions with the pupils' answers may be interesting.

"How can a fellow get to know some girl he thinks he'd like to take to a football game?"

"Ask her if she likes football and then invite her if she says she does. You don't have to be introduced to someone who's in school with you."

* * * *

"Why do I dislike being kissed by a boy?"

"He's not the boy you like. You aren't grown up enough. Don't worry! You don't ever want to kiss everyone, anyway."

"How can I persuade my mother to let me have dates?"

"Ask a nice boy over to help with your school work, and keep it up until your mother sees he's all right."

* * * *

"I am not permitted to have girls or boys at home, and I have no place to be with my friends. How can I overcome this attitude of my father?"

"Maybe if you would ask a friend or two to stop by your house when your father is home and ask him politely to give you a book you need for studying, he would see your friends are nice. If he meets some, maybe he'll want you to have them over."

And one "answer" from the whole group was a question: "Has this person ever asked her father if she could have friends over, or is she just taking it for granted he'd be opposed to it?"

* * * *

"Is there anything I could eat to make me grow?"

"You shouldn't worry because you'll probably grow a foot all at once. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables and not so much candy. Don't smoke, not until you're taller, anyway."

* * * *

"Is there any way I can be better looking? I don't mean like a movie star but so girls wouldn't look away when they see me."

"Girls aren't that fussy about a boy's looks. Just wear clean clothes and keep your hair cut and combed. Wash often and have your teeth and fingernails clean."

* * * *

"Why do I cry when I get mad—like a baby?"

"Maybe because you are. You need to grow up and learn to control yourself."

When the class discussion was completed, I gave all the students a test on the material covered. The test was composed of specific questions about the text material for the group assigned to each section and general knowledge questions about the text material reported on in class. One adjustment "problem" was included for their attempted solution, and the last section asked for an honest evaluation of the unit. This last part was separate and collected without names. Based on the 89 students in the three classes, 13 said they had enjoyed the unit greatly and had received answers to all the questions they had asked. Forty-nine said they had liked the work and received answers to "most" of their questions. Sixteen thought the unit had been helpful and that honest attempts

had been made to answer their questions. Six stated merely that the work had been "better than spelling," or "all right." Five of the 89 wrote that they would rather "read a good book," "study sentences and punctuation," or "work alone."

One of the 13 wrote that she had already applied the answer to her question, and "it worked just fine!" The question, incidentally, was, "How can I make my parents realize that I'm old enough to ride in a car with a boy to a formal?" The answer was, "Why don't you ask this boy to take your parents for a ride so they can see he's a good driver?" She did that, with the result noted above. One girl commented, "I never realized there could be two sides to your parents' objecting to something you did. Now I think I can understand why they seem strict sometimes." One boy wrote, "Well, I'm glad I learned I might grow some more." Another boy was relieved to know that "boys catch up to girls in social ways."

The whole unit took about two weeks, and interest was kept up throughout primarily, I suspected, because the pupils were interested not only in hearing their own problems answered, but because they were given a rare chance of listening to others' trials and tribulations. The greatest reward came the second semester when Bob queried, "Why can't we study something else like that psychology stuff?"

Martha Jane Lyon

Try the Interview

The interview can be used successfully as an assignment in the English class as well as in journalism. There are aspects of the process which help develop ability in oral and in written communication. It helps the student in planning; in learning to meet people successfully; in developing tact, initiative, and courtesy; and finally, in organizing notes taken during the interview and writing a finished story.

My newspaper staff this past year developed an idea for one issue of the school paper which I believe would work equally well for an English class. It offers an opportunity for each member of the class to do something different in the line of interviewing, and yet affords a single purpose to unify the project.

To explain this purpose I quote the box story which appeared on the front page of the issue of our paper: "This is a special issue of the East Highlights. It is designed to help you know and understand your city at the beginning of a new administration. In this issue, the editors have attempted to sketch the most interesting and important aspects of Rockford. These things are important to you as a citizen of East High and of Rockford. We hope that this issue helps you understand your city and your duties as a citizen."

As the quotation states, the paper came out the week the new city administration took office. Students interviewed every possible official connected with city government, city services, city planning, entertainment, historical sites, etc. Each of the 75 members of the three journalism classes interviewed a different individual. The best stories were printed. This, of course, offered an incentive the English class would not have, but it is by no means essential.

The day after the paper came out, an editorial column in the Rockford *Morning Star* was devoted to our special issue. Since this writer, I believe, did a good job in picking out details typical of the whole issue, I will quote some of what he said. "Nothing pleases us more than to discover that Rockford boys and girls attending our schools are interested in our city government. High school students are only a few years away from becoming voters. If they show interest in city hall affairs while they still are attending school, they are going to make good citizens.

"Members of the Highlights staff interviewed quite a few of our public officials in preparing the special edition.

"Karen Bruce drew the assignment of interviewing Mayor Milton Lundstrom. She put the new mayor on the spot in regard

lish teachers incorporate into the second semester's work a unit built around selected chapters from Dale's *How to Read a Newspaper* and classroom sets of representative American newspapers. Last year we ordered, somewhat in advance of the unit, 40 copies each of the New York *Times,* the *Christian Science Monitor,* the Chicago *Daily News,* the Chicago *Tribune,* the St Louis *Post-Dispatch,* and the San Francisco *Chronicle.* The papers were issues of the same date, one chosen arbitrarily by the teachers concerned, to procure a variety of treatments of the same news events. In addition to the text and the newspapers, we used several films, including *Trees to Tribunes* and a similar record of the publication of the Rockford *Morning Star,* one on how to read a newspaper critically, and a film strip showing the highlights of publication of the New York *Times.* We found some of these to be repetitious and probably will not use all of them again. *Trees to Tribunes* is probably the most dramatic pictorial interpretation of the physical greatness of a large daily paper as a business and industry.

When I taught this unit last year for the first time, we were in the midst of a local political campaign. I covered a large bulletin board with front pages and editorial pages from our local press and from other small local publications reflecting a variety of political opinion. Feeling was high in the campaign, and the display gave vivid proof of the fact. We talked about the campaign and watched for examples of slanted news on both sides. We began a collection of slanted headlines, of editorialized news stories, and of emotionalized words. We looked for the reasons behind these examples. One class, as I mentioned previously, questioned the local daily on its use of space for the representation of public opinion. This project was begun after the editorial pages of seven or eight nationally prominent daily papers were posted on the same board with the editorial pages of our own paper.

A good deal of current history was digested without noticeable ill effects. One must know the facts in order to commend or condemn a news story or an editorial. If one thinks a paper publishes only those letters to the editor which agree with the paper's policies, then one must make sure of the policies of the paper. And that means reading the editorials, often a none-too-palatable task for a student. It also means reading more than one paper, searching out the news magazines, listening to radio commentators, asking questions, getting at the truth. Parents, friends, other teachers enter the project. "Say," said Bob, "now I see what my history teacher meant about newspapers being able to help start and stop wars!" Before and after school my juniors brought in friends to show off

their words that had appeared in print. And Dick brought us a word of encouragement: "A man at my father's plant saw our last letter in the paper, and he says we're doing a great job!"

We did not "complete" the unit; we merely stopped at a convenient stopping-place when our time ran out. Little threads of aroused interest ran through our work the rest of the semester, and I could not fail to notice, for the rest of the year, the absence in those classes of that classic remark, "Well, it must be so; it was in the paper."

MIRIAM TUNISON

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Pictures and Paragraphs

The sophomore pencil may be sharply pointed and flamboyant in color. It may be nondescript and chewed by nervous adolescent teeth. Or it may be a carefully hoarded stub, having no possible acquaintance with a pencil sharpener. Between the often unfathomable sophomore mind and the sophomore pencil, there seems to exist a gap that is difficult to bridge. But usually sophomores need only a little encouragement to allow their half-formed but fervent ideas to find their way across this seemingly interminable chasm. Then the pencil becomes a magic wand through which yearning and confusion become beauty and order. At times the only encouragement needed by the sophomore may take the form of an "assignment shove." One rather painless way to administer the gentle push is the "look at a picture and write" device.

If one were to enter room 104 at East High School on writing day, he might see thirty or more sophomores filing past my desk, each taking a picture from a box. Upon being assured that he may exchange his blind choice for any remaining picture, the sophomore is asked to look into the picture, to live the picture.

As a starting point I may hold up a large picture to the class. Perhaps it is a traditional scene of quiet beauty. Together we note the many shades of green.

"Chartreuse," my fashion-minded girl says confidently.

"Blotter green," comments a practical one.

"No, rich thick green," dreamily entones another.

"Lush, you mean," brightly suggests the pert one.

"Cat-eye green?" questions still another. Her own green eyes are smiling.

Yes, some do say, "It just looks green to me."

We listen to the "swish, swish" of the wind through "gently bent grass." To some the wind says "shush, shush" instead of "swish, swish." To others it "just blows and feels good on my sweaty face."

A picture of a turbulent city scene brings the sophomores into the sights and sounds of State and Main Streets in Rockford. Traffic signals become "mammoth polka dots of red and green and yellow" or "big blobs of confetti." The blare of the pictured city becomes "a melody of city sounds." We hear "the symphony of the city" played on "mechanical machines by mechanical men."

Soon it is time for the pupils to write about their own pictures. I ask them to "walk into the picture and write of what they experience." After several moments of "Yes, you may use your imagination but try to base it on your own experience," and "No, you need not write about everything there," we start.

The resulting paragraphs appear to justify this somewhat artificial device. Sandy catches a glimpse of the innocence and reverence of a small boy at prayer before a lighted candle. She sees "a little boy, his hands folded in reverence, praying to the Almighty." She closes. "The room is empty and quiet now, except for the little boy and the candle. The candle flickers once—then slowly goes out."

Mike wonders why a lone man treads the boardwalk at night. It is "dark impenetrable night that clings to everything. Is the solitary traveler on some satanic mission? Or is he only going to the corner for cigars? His purpose is locked deep in his mind, and I will never know why this lonely traveler walks the boardwalk by night."

Dennis feels that a lone street light "may be guiding people through the lonely streets to their destinations. Perhaps this street light is like the Supreme Light, which guides people through the dark and confusion of life."

June entitled her selection "Grandma" whom she pictures as "gaunt and lined with fatigue." With wise tenth-grade perception she looks beyond the outer appearance of age. "I'm sure that you missed the set jaw, the look of determination. Grandma is strong in herself and in her God. I catch the sparks of indignation as they fall at my feet. Grandma cannot fail with the ample backing she has."

Nancy understands the compassion of a big man for a little dog and the confidence that a master can give to five little wobbly puppies, white with black ears and rakish black eye patches. "The

master came clomping along the rustic porch in massive boots. The puppies romp at his feet like little rubber balls . . . and listen to their master's gentle, yet convincing, voice."

Jeanne revels in a winter scene and sees "old trees hanging lazily over a cold river. Snow clings like lace to the intricate design the small branches make." Suzanne finds that Lake Geneva "is just a big frozen ice cube. A fence leans from the heavy snow that is packed against it. In the distance a farm house that is warm and cozy peeks around a snow-covered hill." Mary discovers "miniature fairy castles hidden among the newly-fallen snow flakes."

Michael understands how a "September sun is making everything on the old battered farm look beautiful." Because of the sun there is "a tall solid gold oak tree. It has seen the birth, the life, and the death of the farm. Off to the left, I notice the gold-plated meadow and the row of trees that separates the earth from the sky."

John travels into the world of "dark gray skeletons of the trees against the lighter gray of the storm clouds." And he hears "the cold shivering moan of the winds." Jane finds "overlapping shades of green that run wildly toward the valley." To Audrey a wet tree is "a monster with long groping fingers that try to pluck the clouds apart to let in the sunshine of a new day and a new world."

Milo titles his paragraph "Spring Redecoration." He sees the "green, beautifully patterned carpet surging through the dead matted forest floor of bygone years." DeVerne feels and pictures "night closing in on the prairie as the cool breezes are lapping my face." Sandra knows about night, too. "I can hear the peaceful silence of the night." Dale interprets the language of the clouds. "They gather in the sky and rumble as if they were discussing the most effective way of causing destruction."

It seems to me that from this writing exercise the sophomores get more than an adeptness in descriptive phraseology. Behind their rather lavish adjective decoration, there is often revealed a sensitivity to and yearning for that vast area of beauty and goodness which every teacher wishes for her pupils. Sophomores can understand Klaas' sympathetic portrayal of "the lonely boy" who is looking at the stained glass window. "As he stared at the figure of the Lord pictured in the window, his search, he knew, was near the end. The long cold uncertain days were over for him." Or sophomores may realize as Harold does that "There is a small frail animal called man, trying to conquer the mountains. He probably won't ever reach the top."

ADELE C. JOHNSON

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